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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 31, 2006**

Former Prichard Police Officer Charged With Using Excessive Force

A Federal Grand Jury returned a three count Indictment against Jason Hardy Hunt a former Police Officer for the City of Prichard. The Indictment charges that Jason Hunt, while an officer with Prichard Police Department, used excessive force on James Woodard. Woodard sustained injuries as a result of the use of excessive force. The incident occurred on March 22, 2005, in the parking lot of a convenience store located in Prichard, Alabama.

“The Department of Justice is committed to protecting our civil rights. These prosecutions are essential to maintaining the public trust in law enforcement,” stated United States Attorney Deborah J. Rhodes.

Hunt is also charged with two counts of making false entries in public records or documents concerning the March 22, 2005 incident. One of the false entries was in a Prichard Police Department Incident/Offense Report, and the other in a State of Alabama, Criminal Complaint which charged Woodard with Resisting Arrest.

Hunt is charged with making the false entry in Incident/Offense Report, more commonly known as a police report, by saying : that “when I (Detective Hunt) got between 2-3 feet to him [James Woodard] he grabbed me (Detective Hunt) and tried to slam me, but I (Detective Hunt) was strong enough to get my hands free around his and take him [James Woodard] to the ground.”

The other false entry was in a State of Alabama, Criminal Complaint. Hunt is charged with making the false statement that James Woodard “grabbed Detective Jason Hunt by his

lower waist, near Officer Hunt's loaded weapon, causing a struggle between the officer and [James Woodard]."

Debra Mack, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Mobile Field Office, said, "The public entrusts its law enforcement officials with protecting the community, and the FBI has as one of its top priorities to enforce federal civil rights violations and ensure that the protected civil rights of all citizens are not abridged."

The penalty for a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 242-Excessive Force is up to 10 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 fine. The penalty for a violation of 18 U.S.C. §1519-False Entries in Records or Documents, is up to 20 years imprisonment and a fine up to \$250,000. Hunt is expected to be arraigned in April 2006.

The case was investigated by FBI Special Agent George Glasser. The case is being prosecuted jointly by the United States Attorney's Office for Southern District of Alabama and the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.